

ELECTRONIC CAMERA RECORDING/PLAYBACK APPARATUS FOR SHOOTING  
PICTURES AND EDITING SHOT DATA

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an electronic camera  
5 recording/reproduction apparatus which is operable to both shoot  
pictures and to edit shot data.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Conventionally, there have been two types of electronic  
camera recording/playback apparatuses, one not having a function  
10 of editing and the other having the function of editing. The  
electronic camera recording/playback apparatus not having the  
function of editing must use equipment such as a personal  
computer or the like to edit shot data.

Hereinafter, an example of a conventional electronic camera  
15 recording/playback apparatus will be described with reference to  
figures 9 and 10. Initially, the structure of the conventional  
electronic camera recording/playback apparatus will be described.  
Figures 9 and 10 are a forward perspective view and a backward  
(rear) perspective view, respectively, illustrating the structure  
20 of a conventional electronic camera recording/playback apparatus  
300. The conventional electronic camera recording/playback  
apparatus 300 is provided with a lens 301, a liquid crystal  
display 302, and operation buttons 303.

Next, the operation of the conventional electronic camera  
25 recording/playback apparatus 300 will be described. When the

operator points the lens 301 at a subject, the subject is reflected on the liquid crystal display 302, and the operator can shoot the subject by pressing the operation button 303. In order to edit the shot data, the operator connects a personal computer  
5 to the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 300 by a cable, starts software for editing the shot data on the personal computer, and edits the shot data on the screen of the personal computer.

On the other hand, it is not easy for the operator to  
10 perform editing with the conventional electronic camera recording/playback apparatus having the function of editing because of restrictions on its structure. Further, since the main unit of the apparatus must be compact, the number of operation buttons to be provided is limited. Therefore, it is  
15 difficult to increase the operations which are required for editing. Further, the apparatus must be provided with an operation button for switching the operation mode between the shooting mode and the editing mode. Although there has been an electronic camera recording/playback apparatus having a touch  
20 panel on a liquid crystal display to increase the number of operation buttons and thereby to improve the operability, since the operator directly touches the liquid crystal display for operation, bleeding may occur on the liquid crystal display or the liquid crystal display may be contaminated by fingerprints.

25 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is made to solve the above-described problems and its object is to provide an electronic camera recording/playback apparatus which is simple to operate and which enables both shooting and editing of shot data.

5        Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description. The detailed description and specific embodiments described herein are provided only for illustration since various additions and modifications within the scope of the present invention will  
10 be apparent to those skilled in the art from the detailed description.

According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electronic camera recording/playback apparatus having the function of shooting a subject and the function of  
15 editing shot data. The electronic camera recording/playback apparatus comprises a main unit and a display unit which displays a shot image or an edited image. Further, the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus is able to take plural attitudes to the main unit, wherein the display unit takes: a closed attitude  
20 in which a display screen of the display unit confronts the side surface of the main unit and the rear surface of the display unit is exposed; a shooting attitude in which the display unit is released from the side surface of the main unit; and an editing attitude in which the display screen of the display unit is  
25 parallel to the side surface of the main unit and is exposed to

the outside. Therefore, the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus is easy to handle in the closed attitude, and it enables the operator to perform shooting and editing easily.

According to a second aspect of the present invention, the  
5 electronic camera recording/playback apparatus of the first aspect includes: attitude recognition means for recognizing that the display unit takes any one of the closed attitude, the shooting attitude, and the editing attitude; and mode switching means for setting the main unit in the power-off state, the  
10 ready-for-shooting state, or the ready-for-editing state when the attitude recognition means recognizes that the display unit takes the closed attitude, the shooting attitude, or the editing attitude, respectively. Therefore, the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus obviates the need for the operator  
15 to perform mode switching.

According to a third aspect of the present invention, in accordance with the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus of the second aspect, the display unit is provided with a plurality of operation buttons which are arranged on the  
20 periphery of the display screen. The respective operation buttons are used correspondingly to the operations for shooting in the shooting attitude and the operations for editing in the editing attitude in the shooting attitude and in the editing attitude, respectively. Therefore, the editing functions can be  
25 increased without increasing the number of operation buttons.

Further, there is no need to provide a touch panel.

According to a fourth aspect of the present invention, in accordance with the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus of the third aspect, the mode switching means displays,  
5 on the display screen, the function descriptions of the respective operation buttons in each of the shooting attitude and the editing attitude in positions corresponding to the respective operation buttons. Therefore, in both of the shooting attitude and the editing attitude, the operator can easily read the  
10 function descriptions.

According to a fifth aspect of the present invention, the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus of the fourth embodiment further includes: mounting means on which an external memory unit for holding system data of other equipment is  
15 mounted; mounting recognition means for recognizing that the external memory unit is mounted on the mounting means; and system data storage means for holding the system data that is stored in the external memory unit. Therefore, it is possible to use the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus as other equipment  
20 by mounting an external memory unit which holds system data of the other equipment on the mounting means.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a forward perspective view illustrating the closed attitude of an electronic camera recording/playback  
25 apparatus according to a first embodiment of the present

invention.

Figure 2 is a forward perspective view illustrating the shooting attitude of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus according to the first embodiment.

5        Figure 3 is a rear perspective view illustrating the shooting attitude of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus according to the first embodiment.

Figure 4 is a side elevation view illustrating the editing attitude of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus  
10 according to the first embodiment.

Figure 5 is an enlarged view of a display unit which is included in the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus shown in figure 3.

Figure 6 is an enlarged view of a display unit which is  
15 included in the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus shown in figure 4.

Figure 7 is a block diagram illustrating the construction of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus according to the first embodiment.

20        Figure 8 is a block diagram illustrating the construction of an electronic camera recording/playback apparatus according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 9 is a forward perspective view illustrating the construction of a conventional electronic camera  
25 recording/playback apparatus.

Figure 10 is a rear perspective view illustrating the construction of the conventional electronic camera recording/playback apparatus.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

##### 5 First Embodiment

Hereinafter, an electronic camera recording/playback apparatus according to a first embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to the drawings.

Initially, the construction of an electronic camera  
10 recording/playback apparatus 150 will be described with reference to figures 1 to 7. Figure 1 is a forward perspective view illustrating the closed attitude of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 150, figure 2 is a forward perspective view illustrating the shooting attitude of the  
15 apparatus 150, figure 3 is a rear perspective view of the apparatus 150, and figure 4 is a side elevation view illustrating the editing attitude of the apparatus 150. Further, figure 5 is an enlarged view of a display unit of the apparatus 150 in the shooting attitude, figure 6 is an enlarged view of the display  
20 unit in the editing attitude, and figure 7 is a block diagram illustrating the structure of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 150.

The electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 150 comprises a main unit 100, a lens 101, and a display unit 104.  
25 The display unit 104 is provided with a liquid crystal display

102 as a display screen and operation buttons 11-17. The liquid crystal display 102 serves as a finder to reflect a subject when shooting the subject, and the liquid crystal display 102 serves as a screen to be used for playing back and editing of shot data  
5 when editing the shot data.

The operation buttons 11-17 are placed on the periphery of the liquid crystal display 102, and are used correspondingly to the operations which are required for shooting and the operations which are required for editing. Further, function descriptions  
10 105 of the operation buttons 11-17 are displayed on the liquid crystal display 102.

Further, the display unit 104 takes the following attitudes: the closed attitude in which the liquid crystal display 102 of the display unit 104 confronts the side surface of the main unit 100 and the rear surface of the display unit 104 is  
15 the main unit 100 and the rear surface of the display unit 104 is exposed (refer to figure 1); the shooting attitude in which the display unit 104 is released from the side surface of the main unit 100 (refer to figures 2 and 3); and the editing attitude in which the liquid crystal display 102 is parallel to the side  
20 surface of the main unit 100 and is exposed to the outside (refer to figure 4).

As shown in Figure 7, the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 150 further includes: an attitude recognition unit 106 (attitude recognition means) for recognizing  
25 that the display unit 104 is in any one of the above-mentioned



closed attitude, shooting attitude, and editing attitude; a mode switching unit 107 (mode switching means) for setting the main unit 100 in the power-off state, ready-for-shooting state, or ready-for-editing state when the attribute recognition unit 106  
5 recognizes that the display unit 104 is in the closed attitude, shooting attitude, or editing attitude, respectively; and a control unit 108 for controlling the respective components of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 150 into the respective states upon the receipt of a signal outputted from the  
10 mode switching unit 107.

The attitude recognition unit 106 is, for example, a sensor, and recognizes a signal indicating each attribute of the display unit 104. The mode switching unit 107 sends a state signal to the control unit 108 so as to set the electronic camera  
15 recording/playback apparatus 150 in any one of the above-mentioned states according to an attribute recognition signal outputted from the attribute recognition unit 106. The control unit 108 controls the respective components such as the display unit 104 so as to set the electronic camera recording/playback  
20 apparatus 150 in the state that is indicated by the state signal.

Next, the operation of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 150 according to the first embodiment will be described with reference to the drawings. Figure 1 shows the closed attitude, wherein the electronic camera  
25 recording/playback apparatus 150 is in the power-off state.

In the closed attitude shown in figure 1, when the display unit 104 is raised from the main unit 100, the display unit 104 takes the shooting attitude shown in figures 2 and 3. At this time, the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 150 is  
5 in the ready-for-shooting state. In the ready-for-shooting state, power is applied to the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 150, and the operation buttons 11-17 are in their operable states corresponding to the respective operations which are required for shooting in the shooting attitude.

10 Figure 5 is an enlarged view of the display unit 104 in the shooting attitude. With reference to figure 5, the functions of the operation buttons 11-17 are "PHOTO SNAP", "ZOOM OUT", "ZOOM IN", "FUNCTION", "E.I.S", "FADE", and "BACK LIGHT", respectively, and the function descriptions corresponding to the respective  
15 operation buttons 11-17 are displayed on the liquid crystal display 102. When the operator points the lens 101 at a subject, the subject is reflected on the liquid crystal display 102. While watching the subject on the liquid crystal display 102, the operator performs the processes (operations) such as adjusting  
20 the brightness of the liquid crystal display or the image quality by using the "FUNCTION" operation, zooming of the image by using the "ZOOM OUT" or "ZOOM IN" operation, correcting a blurred image by using the "E.I.S" operation, fading by using the "FADE" operation, and correcting the back light by using the "BACK  
25 LIGHT" operation, and thereafter, pressing "PHOTO SNAP" so as to

take a still picture of the subject.

Next, from the shooting attitude shown in figures 2 and 3, the display unit 104 is turned 180 degrees around the joint of the display unit 104 and the main unit 100 so as to make the liquid crystal display 102 face forward, and is then pushed down toward the main unit 100, whereby the display unit 104 takes the editing attitude shown in figure 4, and the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 150 goes into the ready-for-editing state. At this time, the functions of the operation buttons 11-17 are changed from those corresponding to the respective operations for shooting in the shooting attitude to those corresponding to the respective operations for editing in the editing attitude.

Figure 6 is an enlarged view of the display unit 104 in the editing attitude. In the editing attitude, the functions of the operation buttons 11-17 are "FUNCTION", "UP", "DOWN", "STOP", "F.F.", "PLAY", and "REW", respectively, and the function descriptions of the respective buttons are displayed on the liquid crystal display 102. The operator performs editing and outputs a desired image by using the functions (operations) corresponding to the respective operation buttons, such as playing back the image of the shot data by using the "PLAY" operation, fast forwarding the image by using the "F.F." operation, rewinding the image by using the "REW" operation, and stopping the image by using the "STOP" operation, while

displaying the image on the liquid crystal display 102.

Alternatively, the operator displays, by using the "FUNCTION" operation, an editing menu of special effects such as mosaic, mirror, wipe, mix, sepia, monotone, trail, art, high sensitivity, etc. on the liquid crystal display 102, selects a desired special effect item from the editing menu by using the "UP" and "DOWN" operation buttons 12-13, and edits and outputs a reproduced image having the selected special effect.

Next, the operation of the display unit 104 will be described.

As shown in figures 3 and 5, when the display unit 104 takes the shooting attitude, the orientation of the display unit 104 is as follows. That is, with reference to the vertical direction of the main unit 100, the operation button 14 ("FUNCTION") is arranged in the upper left position of the display unit 104 as shown in figures 3 and 5, the operation buttons 15, 16, 17 ("E.I.S", "FADE", "BACK LIGHT") are arranged from the left in the center-to-right position of the upper part of the display unit 104, and the operation buttons 11, 12, 13 ("PHOTO SNAP", "ZOOM OUT", "ZOOM IN") are arranged from the bottom in the center-to-bottom position of the left hand side part of the display unit 104. In the display unit 104 so oriented, the subject is displayed with its head pointing upward on the liquid crystal display 102. Further, the function descriptions 105 such as "FUNCTION" are displayed in the same

vertical direction as that of the subject so that the operator can correctly read the characters of the function descriptions 105.

Next, when the attitude of the display unit 104 is changed  
5 from the shooting attitude shown in figures 3 and 5 to the editing attitude shown in figures 4 and 6 by the above-mentioned operation, the orientation of the display unit 104 becomes as follows. That is, with reference to the vertical direction of the main unit 100, the operation button 14 ("STOP") is arranged  
10 in the lower right position of the display unit 104 shown in figures 4 and 6, the operation buttons 15, 16, 17 ("F.F.", "PLAY", "REW") are arranged from the right in the center-to-left portion of the lower part of the display unit 104, and the operation buttons 11, 12, 13 ("FUNCTION", "UP", "DOWN") are arranged from  
15 the top in the center-to-top position of the right hand side part of the display unit 104. In the display unit 104 so oriented, the subject is displayed with its head pointing upward on the liquid crystal display 102. Further, the function descriptions 105 such as "FUNCTION" are displayed in the same vertical  
20 direction as that of the subject so that the operator can correctly read the characters of the function descriptions 105.

As described above, in the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus according to the first embodiment, the display unit can take the closed attitude, the shooting  
25 attitude and the editing attitude, and is provided with the mode

switching means for setting the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus in the power-off state, the ready-for-shooting state, or the ready-for-editing state when the display unit takes the closed attitude, the shooting attitude, or the editing attitude, respectively. Further, the operation buttons are used correspondingly to the respective operations which are required for shooting in the shooting attitude and the respective operations which are required for editing in the editing attitude, and the function descriptions of the operation buttons in each of the shooting attitude and the editing attitude are displayed on the display screen in positions corresponding to the respective operation buttons. Therefore, the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus of the first embodiment is easy to handle in the closed state, and the electronic recording/playback apparatus enables the operator to perform shooting and editing easily. Further, the apparatus obviates the necessity for the operator to perform mode switching. Still further, the editing functions can be increased without increasing the number of operation buttons. Furthermore, there is no need to provide the apparatus with a touch panel. Moreover, in both of the shooting attitude and the editing attitude, the operator can easily read the function descriptions.

#### Second Embodiment

Hereinafter, an electronic camera recording/playback apparatus according to a second embodiment of the present

invention will be described with reference to figure 8. In figure 8, the same reference numerals as those shown in figure 7 designate the same or corresponding parts.

Initially, a description will be given of the structure of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus according to the second embodiment.

In figure 8, reference numeral 200 denotes an electronic camera recording/playback apparatus, 204 denotes a memory card (external memory unit) for holding system data of an electronic notepad, 201 denotes a mounting pad (mounting means) on which the memory card 204 is mounted, 202 denotes a mounting recognition unit (mounting recognition means) for recognizing that the memory card 204 is mounted on the mounting pad 201, and 203 denotes a system memory (system data storage means) for holding the system data that is stored in the memory card 204.

Next, the operation of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 200 according to this second embodiment will be described with reference to figure 8. When the operator does not mount anything on the mounting pad 201, the mounting recognition unit 202 recognizes that nothing is mounted on the mounting pad 201, and the control unit 108 controls the respective components such as the display unit 104 so that the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 200 operates as an electronic camera recording/playback apparatus. Thereby, the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 200 can be used,

as a matter of course, as an electronic camera recording/playback apparatus.

On the other hand, when the operator mounts the memory card 204 which holds the system data of the electronic notepad on the mounting pad 201, the mounting recognition unit 202 recognizes that the memory card 204 is mounted on the mounting pad 201, and the system memory 203 stores the system data that is stored in the memory card 204. The control unit 108 controls the respective components such as the display unit 104 so that the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 200 operates as an electronic notepad based on the system data that is stored in the system memory 203. Thereby, the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 200 can be used as an electronic notepad.

While in this second embodiment the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 200 uses a memory card as an external memory unit, a MD may be used instead of the memory card, or system data may be distributed from an external unit such as a personal computer. Further, while in this second embodiment the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus 200 is used as an electronic notepad, the apparatus 200 may be used as a game machine by using an external memory unit which holds system data of a game machine so long as it can be used in the attitude of the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus.

As described above, the electronic camera



recording/playback apparatus according to the second embodiment is provided with the mounting means on which an external memory unit for holding system data of other equipment is mounted, the mounting recognition means for recognizing that the external  
5 memory unit is mounted on the mounting means, and the system data storage means for holding the system data that is stored in the external memory unit. Therefore, it is possible to use the electronic camera recording/playback apparatus of the second embodiment as other equipment by mounting an external memory unit  
10 for holding system data of the other equipment on the mounting means.